

Volunteer

SUMMER/FALL 2011

a resource for McHenry County Conservation District volunteers



Focus on Historical Site Volunteers

Powers-Walker House Special Events

If you've attended *The Ice Cream Social of 1858* or *Harvest Gathering of 1858* at the Powers-Walker historic home in Glacial Park, you've witnessed first-hand how popular these events have become.

To provide the public with more opportunities to visit this historic 1854 Greek Revival house, we've added monthly "living history" open houses in addition to the traditional special events. Volunteers are needed to fill positions as historical interpreters, greeters, people counters and tour guides. Dressing in attire from the 19th Century, volunteers demonstrate early settlement crafts and everyday living skills from the 1850's. If you enjoy wearing your Trail of History costume and are looking for additional opportunities to step back in time, please consider joining the Powers-Walker program family of historical volunteers.



Interested in volunteering at any of these upcoming Powers-Walker House events? Contact Denice to get involved.

Monthly tours

Saturday, July 9
Sunday, August 21

Archaeological Awareness

Sunday, September 11



McConnell Farmstead Volunteer Workdays

Did you know that the District owns an 1870's farmstead in Richmond? It has a nearly complete set of farm buildings that need a little TLC. Although this historic site is not yet open to the public, it is hoped that one day it will be used as a living history farm. The Friends of McConnell are hosting workdays to clear brush, pick up debris, and make minor repairs to buildings. *Why not get involved from the beginning and volunteer a few hours?* Call Gail Brown at (815) 678-4532 or just show up with your work gloves ready to work. *We hope to see you there!*

All registered volunteers are invited to the workdays!

June 18, 9:30 a.m.–Noon, 6102 Broadway, Richmond



Contact Denice Beck, Volunteer Coordinator • dbeck@mccdistrct.org • 815.338.6223 x229

District News



Thank you!

During 2010, District volunteers contributed a total of **13,933 hours** in service to the open lands, wildlife and citizens of McHenry County. Based on an estimated value of volunteer time, this equates to an equivalent donation of **\$290,500** to the Conservation District.

Hours	2010 Volunteer Program Hours
281	Adopt-A-Trail
179	Office & Administrative Assistance
765	Education Services Department
494	Festival of the Sugar Maples
2,064	Trail of History
664	Métis Village (includes <i>Trail of History</i>)
24	Geocache Rally
786	Powers-Walker House & McConnell Farmstead
154	Hunting Program
175	Land & Facilities Site & Trails Maintenance
1,782	Land & Facilities Scouting Programs
276	Monitor – Wildlife
3,650	NRM Stewardship Program
1,350	Prairie Trail Safety Watch
1,082	Plants of Concern & Seed Collection
191	Wildlife Resource Center

In Memory...



One of the District's long-time volunteers, Howie Alton, passed away last winter. Howie contributed over 1,200 hours at the Powers-Walker House programs and reconstruction during his 14 years as a volunteer. He also volunteered at the *Trail of History* for over 10 years. Howie could always be depended on to show up early and help out with any project. He will always be remembered for his great sense of humor and puns which came to be known around Powers-Walker as "Howie-isms".

District Volunteers —

Have you moved, changed your phone number or email address? Have you added volunteer duties? Keeping the database up-to-date is an important task that allows us to be more efficient in communicating with you.

If you are receiving this newsletter, but are no longer an active volunteer, please let Denice know so that we can remove your name from the mailing list. Please call or email Denice to update your contact information.

If you're interested in exploring other District volunteer opportunities, let's talk!

 **Are you keeping track of your volunteer hours?**
Turn them in to Denice or your supervisor. Thanks! 

What's new?

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Members of this volunteer committee serve as advocates for the District. They are updated regularly on the numerous preservation, restoration and site improvement projects underway so that they can help communicate the mission of the District.

The committee recently completed a task force study on Community Gardens. If you're interested in learning more about this study, please visit www.MCCCDistrict.org and look under publications.

Get Connected

SPECIAL SKILLS WE'D LOVE TO KNOW ABOUT...

CARPENTRY/WOODWORKING VOLUNTEERS

Do you have skills, tools and an interest in woodworking or carpentry? Occasionally, the District has special projects for woodworkers and carpenters, and we are starting a database of volunteers who we can call if you're willing to help out. Contact Denice to have your name placed on the list.

ARTS AND CRAFTS VOLUNTEERS

Artistic talent is often needed by various departments throughout the District, and if you are an artist or craftsman willing to share your skills, we'd love to hear from you. If you tell Denice what medium or craft you work in we can call on you when the need arises.

S.W.E.E.P.—Safety Watch Education and Environmental Program

Have you noticed the new SWEEP signs that show you who to call if you observe suspicious activity at District sites? If you regularly visit conservation areas, please consider attending the next public meeting to learn more about the District's new citizen watch program. Contact Denice if you wish to be notified of upcoming S.W.E.E.P. meetings.

Do you know Scouts in need of service time?

Be sure to tell them about the second annual **Boy Scout Day of Service, Saturday, September 24**. As a cooperative effort of the Blackhawk Council's Order of the Arrow and the District, restoration and trail clearing projects will be hosted at District Sites. After August 1, visit www.Blackhawkscouting.org or call Denice for sites and sign-up information.



P.T.S.W.—PRAIRIE TRAIL SAFETY WATCH



P.T.S.W. is off to a rousing start! Wearing their new purple and white uniform shirts, 35 Safety Watchers attended the scenario-based training and

team building meeting in May to demonstrate their observational skills, self-defense strategies and CPR knowledge. Monthly meetings are held to keep Safety Watchers on top of the latest trail news, safety training updates, and to build camaraderie.

GEOCACHE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED Cache Your Way Across McHenry County

begins August 1 and volunteers are needed to find locations, determine coordinates, and place caches.

Help is especially needed to place caches during the last weekend in July. Please contact Stephanie Michael at (815) 338-6223 if you can help out.



Education

QUARTERLY GATHERINGS

For Education Volunteers

Join the Education Staff for specialized training, socializing, and the first chance to sign up to volunteer for seasonal programs. *RSVP to Trish Greninger at (815) 479-5779.*



FALL: Wednesday, August 17, 7–9 p.m.
Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

Topic: Questions from the public? Where to find the answers!

Have you been asked a question by the public but you don't know where to find the answer? We will review the District's website, Facebook and Twitter accounts, as well as new print materials that will help you help others.



WINTER: Thursday, November 17, 7–9 p.m.
Prairieview Education Center, Crystal Lake

Topic: Winter Constellations. Who is Orion and what is his story? Have you heard of the Seven Sisters? How are their stories intertwined? We will identify major winter constellations and learn the stories behind them. After signing up to volunteer for your favorite winter programs, we'll go outdoors to enjoy a little quiet stargazing. Be sure to dress for the weather!



Do you enjoy teaching?

Lost Valley Ventures

Volunteers are needed to lead Saturday programs from 2–3:30 p.m. at Lost Valley Visitor Center.

The Education Department is in need of volunteers to lead these family-friendly drop-in programs that are growing in popularity. There is no minimum volunteer commitment, but one Saturday every 6–8 weeks would be ideal. Volunteer preparation consists of reading the lesson plan in advance and discussing any questions you may have with staff. Set-up and clean-up are not expected to take more than 30 minutes, and all supplies will be ready for you. Summer topics: *Terrific Turtles* (June), *Predators and Prey* (July), *Incredible Insects* (August).

Interested in helping out?

Contact Kim Compton,
Brian Carroll or Mary Kozub
at (815) 678-4532
or kcompton@MCCDistrict.org

Volunteers needed for new event!

PRAIRIE FEST

Family-friendly science activities
in a festival atmosphere...

Saturday, October 1
Pleasant Valley Conservation Area

The Education Department is looking for volunteer input and help, not only at this new event, but also with planning and preparation.

Got ideas for activities? We'd love to hear them...

Music, food, guided hikes of the prairie restoration areas, seed collecting, and children's educational activities are being considered.

Can you help? Contact Kim Compton
at (815) 678-4532 ext. 8116
or kcompton@MCCDistrict.org.



Special Events

Returning Trail of History volunteers—be sure to check out the sign up night social!

Trail of History Volunteer Meetings

Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park
Rt. 31 & Harts Rd. in Ringwood.

Required for new Trail volunteers

Orientation & Costuming

Thursday, Aug. 11, 7–9 p.m.

or Tuesday, Aug. 16, 7–9 p.m.

Drop in from 7–8 p.m. for an overview of volunteering at the Trail. During the second hour volunteers who choose to wear costumes will learn how to construct their historical attire.

All New & Returning Trail Volunteers

Don't miss out on the fun!

Sign up Night & Social

Thursday, Aug. 25, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

The magic begins early this year—catch up with old Trail buddies and share past experiences or recruit new volunteers to your station! Dress in costume if you like. Enjoy light refreshments, raffles and fun! Sign up for your Trail schedule and favorite station. Trail volunteers who cannot attend must contact the Volunteer Coordinator from Aug. 26–Sept. 2.

Got an old costume you no longer use? Bring it along to share, swap or donate.

Costume Check & Skills Training

Thursday, Sept. 22, 6:30–9 p.m.

6:30–7:30 p.m. Cornhusk doll workshop

8:00–8:30 p.m. Candle making workshop

Is your new costume ready for the Trail? Drop in any time to have our seamstress check it out. Workshops are recommended for both new and returning volunteers working at those stations.

TRAIL OF HISTORY

October 15 & 16

Volunteers also needed at the
School Day Event, Friday, October 14.

Calling all volunteers—

Have you ever volunteered at the Trail of History? This year consider taking a break from your regular volunteer duties, and help the District with our largest special event. No experience is necessary, and a costume is not needed for many positions.

Families with a sense of adventure can create lasting memories by volunteering together. Children 8–14 may volunteer if accompanied by an adult guardian. The minimum time commitment is a four-hour shift. New Trail of History volunteers should plan on attending one of the orientation meetings in August.



If you love to dress up and pretend...

volunteering in costume might be a perfect fit! Sew your own historically-accurate costume based on our simple patterns, and then interpret and demonstrate traditional skills and crafts of frontier family life, such as: candlemaking, cornhusk doll making, cooking, children's games, two-man saw, apprenticeship, militia tactics, or teaching in a one-room schoolhouse.

If dressing in historic attire is not your thing...

volunteer assistance is also an essential part of support services such as: welcoming visitors, providing basic first aid, describing geological history and basic groundskeeping.

Stewardship/Natural Resource Management



Summer Stewardship meeting... *Save the date!*

Saturday, July 16, 12–3 p.m.
Location To Be Announced

Mix business with pleasure at the annual summer gathering for all Stewardship Program volunteers! Details will be posted on Earth Tenders and invitations will be sent to registered Stewardship volunteers.

Join us for lunch, training, and updates, including the Illinois Dept. of Agriculture's simplified procedure for volunteers to obtain a pesticide operator license.

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Summer classes begin June 11. See *Landscapes* for descriptions. To register, go online at mchenry.edu/coneducation or call (815) 455-8588.

Stewardship candidates enrolled in the training program, contact Tom Simpson at (815) 678-4532 for availability of ERCP scholarships for the required classes.

Habitat Restoration at District Sites

Help the environment and meet new friends!



You don't have to be a stewardship volunteer to be part of a team that helps Site Stewards remove invasive vegetation and restore native habitat at District sites. No experience or time commitment—drop in for one session or volunteer regularly. Tools and training are provided. Dress for weather conditions and wear sturdy footwear and gloves. Students needing service hours are welcome. Interested in a group outing? Call Denice or a Site Steward listed below.



Alden Sedge Meadow, Alden: First Saturday of each month; 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
Dan Wilson (815) 403-7976

Alden Sedge Meadow South, Alden: Third Sunday of each month; 1–3:30 p.m.
Judy and Jack Speer (815) 648-1372 or smwaters@intergate.com

Boger Bog, Bull Valley: Fourth Saturday of each month; 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
Ders Anderson (815) 455-1537

Bystricky Prairie, Woodstock: Anne Basten (815) 338-6223

Coral Woods, Marengo: Kathleen Roberson (815) 245-4093

Cotton Creek Marsh, Island Lake: First and third Sunday of each month; 1–3 p.m.
Mike Bouska (815) 759-0731

Fel-Pro RRR, Cary: Nancy Williamson (815) 459-0931

Fox Bluff, Cary: Connie and Paul Ridl (847) 854-5109

Glacial Park, Richmond: Site Steward training program. Public is welcome. Third Saturday; 1–4 p.m. Meet at the Lost Valley Visitor Center. Ed Collins (815) 678-4532

Grundstrom Woods, Wonder Lake: Second Saturday of each month; 9:30 a.m.–12 p.m.
Chuck and Ann Dubsy (815) 728-9199

Harrison-Benwell, Wonder Lake: First Saturday of each month; 9:30 a.m.–1 p.m.
Pat and Emily Heald (815) 575-1684

The Hollows, Cary: Variable Sundays, call for dates; 9 a.m.–12 p.m. Margie Szymanskyj (815) 479-0988

Lake in the Hills: Variable Saturdays and Sundays; John Scott (847) 658-6241

Pioneer Fen/Dutch Creek, Johnsburg: Third Saturday of each month; 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
Robert Roe (847) 668-8559 or rroe66@gmail.com. Check for updates at <http://sites.google.com/site/dutchcreekvolunteers/>

Pleasant Valley, Woodstock: Variable, call for dates; Greg Rajsky (815) 814-5055 or quirkaceae@yahoo.com

CALL AHEAD!... Check with the steward for cancellation, directions or special instructions before heading out to a restoration day.

Natural Resource Management

WANTED: volunteers to go on field trips to District sites on beautiful fall days!

All registered volunteers are welcome to join seed collection forays. The time commitment is flexible—each week a list of forays is sent by email and volunteers choose convenient locations and times to collect seed with District staff. Contact Denice to have your name placed on the seed collection list.



Native Prairie Plant Seed Collection Orientation for new volunteers

**Tuesday, September 6, 7–8:30 p.m.
Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park**

New to seed collecting?

Plant Ecologist Laurie Boldt will educate volunteers in the protocol of seed collection and plant identification at the Sept. 6 orientation. For more information, call Laurie Boldt at (815) 678-4532. Additional field training will also take place at the site.

Why collect seed?

Plants that are adapted to our region's climate and soils have a greater chance of survival in local restoration projects. In 2010, volunteers collected over 750 pounds of seed from 105 native species, which equated to a savings of over \$46,000 to the District.

McConnell Farmstead at North Branch Conservation Area— where historical volunteers and restoration intersect!



A note to workday volunteers from Gail Brown, Site Steward:

Thanks to all for your help on Saturday. We had a successful work day. We got most of the big brush pile burned, but our big project for the day was clearing the fence line west of the big barn. It required a lot of

hand work to get the entangled wire out of the mass of buckthorn without damaging the baby oaks and yes, all of the cutoffs were herbicided. Now with the underbrush gone, we can get in there with bigger equipment/ chainsaws for the bigger invasive trees/shrubs. Remember that the next work day is scheduled for Saturday, June 18th at 9:30 a.m.

Thanks again — Gail



Photos by Dan Deters



McHenry County
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

18410 U.S. Highway 14 • Woodstock, IL 60098
815.338.6223 • MCCDistrict.org

Volunteer

Summer/Fall 2011

*It's been forty years in the making –
and we couldn't have done it without you!*



40th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Saturday, July 9, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
Lost Valley Visitor Center, Glacial Park

Rain or shine! Check out the summer issue of Landscapes
or visit www.MCCDistrict.org for a schedule of activities.

Keep up to date with District events, notices and
nature sightings — find us on  Facebook and
follow us on  Twitter @DiscoverMCCD.

DON'T FORGET... *look inside for details*

- June 18** McConnell Farmstead Workday
- July 9** 40th Anniversary Celebration
- July 16** Stewardship summer meeting
- Aug. 11** Trail of History New Volunteer Orientation
- Aug. 16** Trail of History New Volunteer Orientation
- Aug. 17** Education Volunteer Gathering
- Aug. 25** Trail of History Volunteer Sign-Up Night & Social
- Sept. 6** Seed Collection Orientation
- Sept. 22** Trail of History Costume Check, Training for Cornhusk Doll and Candle Making
- Oct. 1** Prairie Fest
- Oct. 14** Trail of History School Day Event
- Oct. 15–16** Trail of History
- Nov. 17** Education Volunteer Gathering